

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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TAGS: UNCTAD, EGEN, AORG, UN

SUBJECT: UNCTAD TDB: SYG COREA SPEAKS TO GROUP B ON FUTURE

ROLE OF UNCTAD

REF: USUN 0846

1. SUMMARY: SPEAKING TO GROUP B COUNTRIES AT THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNCTAD TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD, MARCH 16, SECRETARY GENERAL COREA PRESENTED HIS THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE ROLE OF UNCTAD IN VERY GENERAL TERMS, LARGELY REITERATING POINTS MADE AT THE MARCH 1 MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON UN RESTRUCTURING (REPORTED IN REFTEL). WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT COREA HAS DRAFTED A PAPER CONTAINING DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORMING UNCTAD AND ITS SECRETARIAT, BUT HAS DECIDED NOT TO RELEASE IT AT THIS TIME. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT HE DOES NOT WANT TO SUBMIT DETAILED PROPOSALS ON RESTRUCTURING UNCTAD WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE THAT THEY WILL BE STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY THE GROUP OF 77. END SUMMARY.

2. RESPONDING TO GROUP B (DEVELOPED) COUNTRIES'

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INVITATION TO PRESENT HIS PROPOSALS FOR INSTITUTIONAL

CHANGES IN UNCTAD, SECRETARY-GENERAL COREA ADDRESSED THE GROUP ON MARCH 16. SPEAKING IN VERY GENERAL TERMS, COREA REITERATED MANY OF THE POINTS MADE IN HIS MARCH 1 SPEECH TO THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON UN RESTRUCTURING, WHICH WAS REPORTED IN REFTEL. IN HIS REMARKS TO GROUP B, COREA SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT ANY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN UNCTAD MIGHT PROCEED IN TWO PHASES. FIRST, AGREEMENT SHOULD BE REACHED AT UNCTAD IV ON UNCTAD'S FUTURE ROLE. THEN DECISIONS SHOULD BE MADE ON APPROPRIATE MACHINERY AND PROCEDURES IN REFORMING UNCTAD AND ITS SECRETARIAT IN ORDER TO EFFECTIVELY PERFORM ITS NEW ROLE.

3. COREA INDICATED THAT HIS DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN UNCTAD AS AN EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATING MECHANISM IS AN IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE. HE SUGGESTED THAT AT SOME POINT - PERHAPS AFTER THE MTN - WE SHOULD EXAMINE WHETHER THE INSTITUTIONS SET UP AFTER WORLD WAR II TO DEAL WITH INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC QUESTIONS ARE STILL APPLICABLE, OR WHETHER WE WILL NEED "NEW RULES OF THE GAME". COREA INDICATED THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY FAVOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE INTERNATIONAL TRADE ORGANIZATION AS A LONG TERM GOAL. HE ALSO STRESSED THAT ANY INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES MADE IN UNCTAD SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH ANY DECISION WHICH MIGHT LATER BE MADE TO MERGE UNCTAD INTO A MORE COMPREHENSIVE ITO.

4. AS IN HIS NEW YORK SPEECH, COREA SAID THAT A RESTRUCTURED UN SYSTEM SHOULD HAVE A THREE-PRONGED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDING 1) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, 2) SUBSTANTIVE GUIDANCE ON NATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, AND 3) A FORUM TO NEGOTIATE MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES. COREA SAID THAT UNCTAD, AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SHOULD FULFILL THE THIRD ROLE AS A NEGOTIATING FORUM WHICH WOULD ELABORATE ON THE BROAD OBJECTIVES ESTABLISHED BY THE UNGA AND WOULD ENSURE THAT ECONOMIC ISSUES IN THE UN SYSTEM ARE HANDLED CONCRETELY. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT UNCTAD COULD EVENTUALLY TAKE OVER THE WORK OF THE CIEC. WHILE ADVOCATING THAT UNCTAD SHOULD PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS, COREA ASSURED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GROUP B THAT UNCTAD WOULD NOT "SWALLOW UP" THE GATT. HE ALSO SAID HE WOULD ENVISION THE IMF AND THE IBRD CONTINUING IN THEIR PRESENT ROLES. WHILE HE WANTS UNCTAD IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO BE STRENGTHENED AS A NEGOTIATING MECHANISM, COREA SAID HE ALSO WANTS UNCTAD TO CONTINUE TO SERVE AS A FORUM FOR DEBATE AND THE FORMULATION OF NEW CONCEPTS AND IDEAS.

5. RDFERRING TO UNCTAD'S ROLE IN THE UN SYSTEM, COREA SAID HE WOULD NOT WANT IT TO BECOME A SPECIALIZED AGENCY, SINCE IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN UNCTAD'S LINK WITH THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WHICH PROVIDES THE "POLITICAL THRUST" OF SUPPORT FOR UNCTAD'S WORK. HE ALSO SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE WOULD LIKE UNCTAD TO HAVE THE INDEPENDENCE AND FLEXIBILITY OF A SPECIALIZED AGENCY.

6. COMMENT: GROUP B DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION COREA AFTER HIS PRESENTATION SINCE WE ALL AT THAT POINT WERE LATE FOR A PLENARY MEETING. IT DOES NOT APPEAR, IN ANY CASE, THAT HE IS PREPARED TO DISCLOSE FURTHER DETAILS ON HIS INSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS AT THIS TIME. PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR BRILLANTES, WHO HEADS THE G-77 WORKING GROUP ON INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING, TOLD MEMBERS OF US DEL THAT THE G-77 WILL PRESENT THEIR PROPOSALS ON UNCATD'S FUTURE ROLE AT UNCTAD IV. WHEN ASKED IF COREA WILL ALSO PRESENT US WITH DETAILED PROPOSALS AT THAT TIME, BRILLANTES SAID THAT COREA MAY NOT BE ANY MORE SPECIFIC AT UNCTAD IV THAN HE IS NOW. WE UNDERSTAND FROM SECRETARIAT SOURCES, HOWEVER THAT COREA HAS DRAFTED A PAPER WHICH CONTAINS DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESTRUCTURING UNCTAD AND ITS SECRETARIAT TO ENABLE IT TO BECOME A MORE EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATING MECHANISM. WHY HE HAS NOT RELEASED THIS PAPER TO THE BOARD IS NOT CLEAR. HE MAY BE HOLDING IT BACK FOR TACTICAL REASONS, NOT WISHING TO RELEASE DETAILED PROPOSALS UNTIL HE IS CERTAIN THAT THEY WILL BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY AT LEAST THE GROUP OF 77. THE G-77 WORKING GROUP CHAIRED BY BRILLANTES HAS JUST BEGUN ITS WORK AND IT APPEARS THAT COREA DOES NOT WANT TO GET OUT TOO FAR IN FRONT OF THEM ON THE INSTITUTIONAL QUESTION. DALE

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